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ABSTRACT

THE WRITER, WHO FEELS THAT THE CHIEF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BLACK ENGLISH (BE) AND WHITE ENGLISH (WE) ARE PHONOLOGICAL AND NOT SYNTACTIC, REPORTS ON A SOCIOLINGUISTICALLY ORIENTED EXAMINATION OF THAT VARIETY OF ENGLISH SPOKEN BY CHILDREN IN RURAL NORTHERN FLORIDA (CBE/FLA). TWENTY-TWO BLACK CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF NINE AND 12 WERE TAPED INDIVIDUALLY AND IN GROUP INTERVIEWS OVER A PERIOD OF TWO WEEKS. OBSERVATIONS OF THIS AND OTHER DATA LED TO A POSTULATION OF A SPECIFIC LINGUISTIC "REGISTER," OR RANGE OF STYLES OF LANGUAGE. THE "SCHOOL" REGISTER, WHICH THE CHILDREN USED DURING THE FIRST INTERVIEWS, WAS NON-FLUENT AND DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT FROM THE "NON-SCHOOL" REGISTER, IN WHICH THEY WERE VERBAL, FLUENT, AND ARTICULATE. IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DISTINCTION BETWEEN REGISTERS ARE DISCUSSED IN THE LIGHT OF DISPARATE THEORIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BE AND WE, AND THEIR PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE TEACHING OF READING. IN PRESENTING A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CBE/FLA, THE AUTHOR LISTS THE PHONES, A PROBABLE INVENTORY OF PHONEMES, AND THEIR PHONOLOGICAL RULES. SHE FOUND FOUR MAIN MORPHOSYNTACTIC DEVIATIONS FROM STANDARD WE, NAMELY THE USE OF "BE" IN THE PRESENT TENSE. APPENDED IS A SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTION OF "THE THREE LITTLE PIGS," AS TOLD BY A VERBALLY GIFTED 11-YEAR-OLD BOY IN CBE/FLA. (AMM)

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CHILD BLACK ENGLISH IN NORTHERN FLORIDA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXAMINATION

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Atlanta, Georgia

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CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

The present work is a sociolinguistically oriented examination of that variety of English spoken by children in rural Northern Florida. It resembles previous dialect studies chiefly in its concentration upon a specific regional form of language; in most other respects it will be found to differ from such studies, as will be discussed below.

A brief explanation of the purpose and contents of this work, as well as the nature of the disciplines which it embodies, may prove helpful. As the word sociolinguistics itself indicates, studies in this field typically are concerned with more than pure linguistic description of the language being studied, often termed the target language. Sociolinguistics examines the place of the target language within a social structure or grouping, and may be concerned with such topics as interdialect contact, reactions of one linguistic community to the speech of another, overt or covert language standardization within a community or a country, use of language to indicate various relationships within a specific group, and so forth (cf. Fishman, 1968). Clearly this is a field rather closely allied with psycholinguistics, the study of individual aspects of language and communication; in fact it is often difficult to distinguish meaningfully between these twin disciplines.

Topics of interest to both psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics are included within the present study, if only because there is no obvious way of tackling the subject of dialect without bringing in larger questions than can be subsumed under technical linguistic description. Moreover, one must

realize that for the teacher or school board interested in applying the results of dialect study to practical situations, there is a hierarchy of data which it is necessary to know. Although one cannot set about changing linguistic forms without accurate and comprehensive description of their present structure, it is perhaps even more essential that administrations in areas with language problems be apprised of the social significance of the dialects with which they must deal, the specific form taken by apparent intercultural communication impairment, the current state of bidialectism and its feasibility as a project goal, and similar questions. This is the type of subject matter which will be dealt with in the current work.

One might at this point comment briefly upon the materials now available in this field, which will serve to point up the necessity for further and more extensive studies such as the present one. The subject of dialect research, as this field is traditionally if somewhat misleadingly termed, consists in a small number of diverse subtopics on which writings have proliferated for at least twenty to thirty years. The oldest form of dialect study, and that perhaps least helpful in solving the ongoing problems of school administration and curriculists, is the dialect atlas (cf. e.g. Kurath & McDavid, 1961). The dialect atlas is an extremely detailed compilation of those linguistic features--typically lexical and phonological--which differentiate speech regions of the target country. Dialect atlas research is still being carried out in the United States; although it is extremely useful for some purposes, it is not designed to produce the kind of output helpful to someone seeking to ameliorate an extant language problem in a classroom. A dialect atlas is a reference work; if thoroughly researched it can serve as a kind of a dictionary of distinguishing features of regional dialects. It is necessary to realize, however, that the

atlas does not distinguish among regional, social and other forms of linguistic divergence, presumably because there is almost no data on this topic. Additionally, since the dialect atlas is intended for other purposes, it does not treat the area of syntax adequately, nor does it analyze the sociocultural facts behind the linguistic differences which it catalogues.

Although other forms of relevant study have developed from the growing interest in intercultural contact and in the culture of poverty, there is still little of value to the educator or curriculist, especially pertaining to language in the Southern United States. Linguistics has not yet become greatly involved in this topic; those works in technical linguistics concerned with this field have in the main either been conducted in Northern urban environments (cf. e.g. Labov, 1967) or have tended to concentrate on relatively limited linguistic types such as Gullah. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, much is needed besides linguistic description of dialects per se, although the current lack of such descriptions has been a major impediment to research. One might also mention the increasing amount of material concerned with the intellectual and educational capabilities of so-called disadvantaged children, much of which is centered around language. Since this topic is treated with growing frequency in the journals of education and child study, educators are by now fairly familiar with it; unfortunately it consists to a great degree of mythology which cannot in any sense be helpful to anyone desiring to develop teaching materials from its findings. In short, the notion of sociolinguistic investigation of dialect study is a new one, and one for which there is clearly great need. This writer hopes that the present paper, despite its brevity, may serve as some indication of possible future directions within the field.

Since the current work is about a form of child language, it is probably necessary to add a few remarks about present views and assumptions on this topic, assumptions which in fact underlie much of the material herein.

The study of child language is generally classified as the province of psycholinguistics; the assumptions given here have been developed within psycholinguistics during approximately the last five to ten years. They have as basis the theory of language which originated in the framework of generative grammar (cf. e.g. Chomsky, 1957, 1965). Prior to about the late 1950's, specialists concerned with language acquisition regarded language as a system of human behavior learned by stimulus-response conditioning, different in degree rather than in kind from any other form of behavior. Children were thought to learn their language wholly by direct imitation of their parents, as follows: it was generally postulated that the child would begin babbling naturally, and that the parent would hear some babbled sound of the child's which resembled a word in 'adult language' and would reward the child for making the sound, by giving him love and approval (cf. e.g. Skinner, 1957; Mowrer, 1960). Thus the child would be likely to make such an utterance again. Gradually the parent would reward or reinforce better and better approximations to adult language, and so the child would learn to speak. Subsequent vocabulary would be added by repetition of items spoken by the parent. The sort of learning involved was considered, it must be emphasized, as being little different from that involved in learning to ride a bicycle or to feed oneself. It is interesting to note that during the era when this concept of language flourished (i.e. from about the 1930's to the 1950's), linguists in general propounded the view that every language is different in all important respects from every other and that there are no significant features common to all languages.

It has been determined, however, that this older view of language is largely incorrect. Rather than having to be taught language or conditioned to speak, the child learns language naturally from his environment. It is currently believed that, as Eric Lenneberg has stated (1967), man has an innate biological propensity for language. The effect of this is that, if a child is placed in the environment of language, he will learn it without the slightest need to be specifically taught how to speak. He does this because he cannot help doing so, much in the manner that he learns to walk without specific instruction. All normal members of the species have this propensity for language. One important way of demonstrating this is through the existence of linguistic universals, or features common to all languages. Far from there being insurmountable differences among languages, there are great underlying similarities among them, and these similarities or linguistic universals tell us some of the most important things about language. The very fact that all children do learn language, no matter what their language may be or whether or not anyone teaches it to them, is a linguistic universal. Another universal is that all children appear to have learned the basic structures of their language by about the same age (between 4 and 6), again no matter what the language may be. Furthermore, all children seem to pass through the same stages during the process of language acquisition. Of course, there are a great many other types of linguistic universals besides these developmental ones; but these have great applicability to the topic of this report in indicating what one may universally expect to find in studying child language.

In addition to these facts of child language, the specialist in dialect study or in the language of the disadvantaged would do well to note the following concomitant points:

1. All languages are highly systematic, and there is no stage of language acquisition at which the learner speaks in a random manner. It is now believed that every speaker has an internalized system of rules by which he produces and understands utterances in his language; many current specialists believe that this system of rules resembles a generative grammar, for a number of reasons too technical to detail at this time. At any rate, language at each stage of its development is systematic. The impression an observer may have of child language--that it consists of numerous mistakes and other items put together in a free and unstructured manner--is incorrect. Although child language is in a state of flux, there are nevertheless rules for it at each stage (cf. e.g. Brown & Fraser, 1964, p. 45). Technically speaking, despite our labeling of some forms as 'mistakes,' they are not such from the viewpoint of their speaker, who has after all integrated them into his system. All forms of language are consistent, no matter how much they may differ from an arbitrary standard of excellence or aesthetic quality and no matter what degree their intelligibility to speakers of other linguistic forms.

2. All languages are adequate to the needs of their environment, and there is no such thing as a primitive language, nor is there evidence that primitive languages ever existed (cf. Lenneberg, 1964, pp. 587-588). No correlation exists between technological sophistication and linguistic complexity, nor in fact between the latter and any other sociological or psychological measures yet discovered. Minority dialects, moreover, are not simpler reductions of a standard language; they are full languages, quite as complex and adequate as standard (i.e. more widespread) languages, regardless of how many features of the standard language they may or may not have adopted. All languages are

composed of numbers of regional, social and other dialects, but in no case save just possibly that of pidgin languages is a minority dialect simpler or sparser than the standard language.

3. The writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf (cf. Whorf, 1956) to the contrary, there is no consistent correlation between language and thought or concept identification. If a language is found which lacks a unitary term for some concept, this does not indicate at all that its speakers are ignorant of or unable to deal with the concept. This has been experimentally verified on a number of occasions. Nor, of course, is there any correlation between phonological structure of a language and physiological features of its speakers. Anyone can learn to pronounce any language; this is a matter of training alone. It is finally not possible to infer anything about the psychological makeup of a people by examining the phonology of their language: possession of a language with many velar fricatives (popularly called 'gutterals') and consonant clusters does not indicate bestiality or stupidity; possession of a language with many open syllables does not indicate love of music or a romantic nature; possession of a language with many diphthongized vowels and few final consonants does not indicate laziness, willful refusal to speak properly or intellectual incapacity to remember how words should sound. Although scarcely anyone would profess such beliefs, it is surprising and dismaying how often they may underlie the current mythos of dialect study.

CHAPTER II: OUTLINE OF RESEARCH; TARGET POPULATION

It will be necessary to set forth a few definitions of the terminology we shall use in this paper. The first matter to be discussed is the question of what to call the language studied by this investigator. We have termed it Child Black English, as spoken in Florida; this is hereafter abbreviated as CBE/Fla (BE being the abbreviation for Black English, which contrasts with White English, or WE). This form of language probably would traditionally be called a dialect. The present work up to this point has adhered to this usage, although it will no longer do so, for the following reason: the term 'dialect' is extremely ambiguous, and is currently used in a rather wide variety of different senses, some of them pejorative (cf. Malmstrom, 1966-67, p. 1). Hereafter we will use this term to indicate a regional variety of language only. Such designations as 'Northern,' 'Midland,' and 'Southeastern' may properly be used with the term dialect employed in this sense. We do not consider a dialect as a social, situational or racial characteristic, then, but only as a set of features peculiar to a geographic area.

Having thus defined dialect, we shall proceed to enumerate and define some other terms which we will be using, hoping by this means to avoid the ambiguity of current usage and to be assured of communicating the intended concept to the reader. We referred earlier to Black English and White English (a rationale for these specific terms will be presented below). Since it has been stated that these are not to be called dialects, they must perforce be something else. We consider them to be the two main genera of the English language as currently spoken in America; Black English is a genus of American English, in other words, as is White English, and American English is presumably the name of the phylum. We term these genera instead of dialects not only

to avoid confusion, but additionally because the term 'dialect' has been considered wrongly as one of opprobrium and thus is doubly well avoided in this ambiguous context. If it is determined through collection and analysis of data that Northern BE differs appreciably from Southern BE, then one may reasonably speak of BE as having Northern and Southern dialects--but Black English is not itself a dialect.

A further term which will be useful here, in addition to dialect and genus, is 'register.' A register may consist in a range of styles of language, which have in common their appropriateness to a given situation or environment. As we are using the term, register differs from style mainly in being broader. It may be determined, for instance, that speakers of some varieties of English do not use the same manner of speaking in school as they use with their friends outside of school; one might then say that these speakers have a School register and a Nonschool register. Within the School register one might perhaps find a good deal of variation in actual features of language; but it can nevertheless be identified as a register because there are presumably features peculiar to this situation and to no other. Typically, registers are differentiated paralinguistically as well as by purely linguistic features, a topic worthy of extensive further investigation.

The matter of Black English--its existence and the reason for the particular nomenclature--must also be discussed here. It is possible to speak of BE as a unified genus of language distinct from WE because there are a number of linguistic characteristics on all levels of language which appear exclusively in the speech of black children (and adults). The sociolinguistic situation appears to correspond to the linguistic one, since there are perceptual differences between Black and White English in all regions of the United

States, so that a speaker (black or white) of a particular region can usually, although not always, identify another speaker of that region as black or white on the basis of speech alone. That this is not infallible is not especially significant; BE and WE subsume different ranges of linguistic features, even though the ranges may overlap. The difference between BE and WE is far greater in the North than in the South, due to demographic facts (cf. Stewart, 1968), but even in the South the difference is manifest. It must be borne in mind, of course, that this is a linguistic fact alone, and its implications for education in language arts are far from self-evident.

In brief, this writer has chosen to term the variety of language under discussion Black English, rather than any of the alternatively proposed names, for one or two quite simple reasons. We have already discussed the term 'dialect' and the reasons for its avoidance when speaking of other than regional speech variations; its use in this particular context has come to be less than highly regarded. The term 'Black English' seems to us clearly expressive of the intended distinction, since one may also speak of 'White English' as the complementary genus. We do not favor the term 'Negro speech,' since it is regarded as insulting by many of its speakers; one should take pains to avoid such usage where possible. In any case, we are speaking of an entire genus of language, not merely of 'speech,' which is technically a far narrower concept.

In the description of CBE/Fla which follows, this investigator has noted which features seem identical with features in Child WE (CWE), insofar as is known. It is not possible to state at this time what are the distinguishing characteristics of Black English, on any level, largely because there is not sufficient data on either Black or White English to make any meaningful comparisons except in the most general terms. As will be shown subsequently,

this writer feels that the differences between BE and WE lie preponderantly in the realm of phonology, in fact overwhelmingly so, and that syntactic differences between the two genera have been greatly overemphasized in many previous works. Part of the reason for this is the difficulty of differentiating features of phonology from features of syntax. The rather extreme lack of data on any form of standard White English cannot be emphasized too strongly here, especially for persons interested in comparative analyses of the two genera. Areas of language in which the lack is acute include prosody (i.e., such nonsegmental features as intonation and juncture); child language, on which there is now only the sparsest possible data store; and all statistical or frequency measures, save perhaps size of lexicon in child language. Even this latter figure has generally been compiled in highly dubious ways. It is thus beyond the present technology of the field to attempt comparative counts of verb-adjective ratios in CBE/CWE, for example; or to speak of the average grammar of the eleven-year-old black child as contrasted with that of the eleven-year-old white child. No complete description of any form of English (or other language) currently exists, nor is the immediate prospect for such description greatly promising. It is suggested that educators and school administrators who feel themselves in need of such data might wish to consider sponsoring specific long-term comparative studies on the particular forms of language in which they are interested, since it is likely that little extant material can be found that will help them. Such comparative studies would represent a major contribution to the field. However, it is not by any means always necessary to amass large amounts of comparative data in order to deal with situations of dialect or genus contact.

The present study is an investigation of the language of children in one county of rural Northern Florida. The target children are between the ages of 9 and 12, the mode age being about 11; all are black. A total of about 22 children were studied, of whom 7 were boys. The disproportionate number of boys and girls in the study is the result of its timing: this investigation was carried out during the early summer, when many boys of this age are working and so are not available during the day.

The collection of data, carried out over a two-week period, yielded approximately 25 hours of taped material. The original plan called for about four days spent in recording children individually, with the remainder of the time spent with groups. Individual taping had been planned to occupy about 45 minutes to 1 hour for each child, and group sessions to occupy about 2½ hours each; these times had been felt (mistakenly) to represent the limit of children's attention span at this age. This plan, however, was totally revised, for the following reason.

Prior to commencing this study, the present writer listened to a number of tapes (some with video component) of children in Florida and Georgia, the object being to gain some familiarity with the language used by these children. Most of the tapes were made in ongoing classes; some few were of individual or group interviews conducted especially for language study purposes. At any rate, all might be generally described as having been obtained from formal and school-like settings. This observation led us to the tentative postulation, later corroborated, of a specific register of Child Black English in Florida and Georgia (probably elsewhere also), limited in use to these settings and some others to be described subsequently.

Within the School register, there are at least two distinct styles, quite probably at least three: one style is used for reading aloud; another, for responding to questions posed by the teacher or other authority figure; and perhaps a third for telling stories or responding at length to questions. The School register is different from the Nonschool register on many levels, the most immediately striking of which is the suprasegmental, including paralinguistic. Most utterances in the style used for responding briefly to the teacher are quite short; we found them to be confined to "yes, ma'am," "no, ma'am," and "I don't know," insofar as the child could manage to do this. The rate of speech is notably slower than in other registers. There are stress and intonation patterns peculiar to school situations also: this register shows an exceptional number of strong and secondary stresses, and an increase in the frequency of higher pitch levels, so that short declarative sentences often commence at about CBE level 3 and rarely have terminals falling lower than about 2. The phonological system appears to have fewer reduced vowels than are found in other registers, at least partly because of the difference in stress patterns; there are also numerous other phonological characteristics found only in this register.

It was of course not possible to postulate unequivocally the existence of a School register merely from observation of these tapes, since there was no nonschool material with which to compare their data; the same register seemed to appear on all the tapes obtained prior to our own study, rather by definition, as it turned out. However, the characteristics of CBE which are found on these tapes are striking enough to lead one to suspect that they do in fact form such

a unified register, and do not comprise the whole of these childrer's language. This hypothesis was borne out immediately by field experience, and led to the change in scheduling during the present study.

The recording sessions were conducted in the elementary school which the children attend during the school year and optionally for summer school; the equipment was set up in a clinic in the office section of the school, since this room is both comfortable and air-conditioned. Prior to the start of field work, a morning was spent in meeting the children and explaining to them, with the help of a teacher known to them and of the principal of the school, what would be asked of them. A schedule was worked out and each child was told when to come for his interview. (Note: The children were at no time told that their language was being studied; they understood the purpose of these sessions only in the most general terms, at least at the beginning, although it is probable that many of them figured it out by the end of the two weeks.) On the first day of recording, five children were scheduled for interviews individually, about one hour apart. We began the inverview by showing the child how the tape recorder operates if he had not had previous experience therewith, which many of the children had in fact had because of various educational projects in the school. We then attempted to elicit conversational or narrative material from the children as per standard field technique.

By the second interview on the first day, it was eminently clear to this investigator that the children being interviewed were speaking in what we had tentatively labeled as their School register, only rather more exaggeratedly so than on the tapes, if possible. This did not seem to be the fault either of the tape recorder or of the specific behavior or style of the investigator, a psycholinguist with previous experience both in field work and in working

with children of about this age. Allowing for idiolectal differences, of course, the language of all children spoken with on the first day was clearly couched in the same register, characterized by features such as those listed supra, most notably extremely short average utterance length and the pitch and stress characteristics mentioned. It was clear too that these children had no intention whatever of revealing their personal likes and dislikes, especially the latter, or in fact of producing any significant amount of free text material. Although content is generally not considered as an appurtenance of register, we must point out that the opinions expressed by these children in the first interviews (e.g. ambitions, attitudes toward school and teachers, favorite pastimes) were obviously designed to produce approval, presumably from the standard type of teacher or other adult who might ask them such questions in the normal course of school circumstances. We are not suggesting, it should be understood, that the children were attempting to behave either as though they were adults or as though they were white, linguistically or otherwise (especially since in fact the majority of their teachers are black); they were instead speaking in a manner approved by their teachers, i.e., very 'carefully' and with much hypercorrection, and saying things likely also to be so approved.

This register, taken as structure plus content (or code, message and medium together), held very little potential for delivering the kind of material desired by this investigator, although it did produce enormous insight into several facets of the total linguistic situation in the region. Now, although the children are drilled in various kinds of purportedly correct pronunciation and syntax--generally in a haphazard fashion and inconsistently--one presumes that they were not exactly taught to speak in their School register; in fact it seems doubtful that this could be taught. Thus it is not precisely accurate to

state that the School register does not represent natural language for the children. It is natural to them, being merely one of the registers which they control. However, it is clearly not that form of language which they use from preference with friends, family or other people whom they trust, nor is it the form of language in which they operate most fluently and automatically. Although the register is probably necessary for the children's optimum survival in their social environment, it is not especially productive in a linguistic or a psychological sense. It is probable that this register is considered the children's 'best' language, by their teachers and perhaps by themselves as well. It is this writer's professional opinion, on the other hand, that the Nonschool language of these children can be considered the main form of their language, for a variety of reasons, some of which will be detailed in a subsequent section of this work.

In any case, we determined that the project would meet with little success if the children were to continue using this register of language, in which, as a matter of fact, large quantities of material had already been recorded by other investigators. Therefore we felt it necessary to alter the procedure in some way to elicit other forms of language. It happened that the four children scheduled for interviews on the second day arrived in a group rather than one at a time. We invited all four to come into the clinic together. This proved to be precisely the magic necessary: two of the children shortly became involved in a discussion (actually a series of brief mock arguments), and subsequently all four were engrossed in the situation and talked animatedly for several hours. We continued recording the children in groups; in fact the groups became increasingly large, since children returned voluntarily day after day, and the problem became one of noise level and hyperactivity rather than inarticulateness and lack of verbal output. To be sure, this success undoubtedly

was due in large part to the specific personality composition of the second-day group, and especially to one member of it, a child (nicknamed Rabbit) with outstanding ability in verbal art.

The outcome of the field study, then, was about 25 hours of verbal material in a decidedly Nonschool register. It should be noted that this was produced despite the continuing presence during all sessions of this investigator, who must have been characterized in terms of role as a white adult teacher, at least during the early sessions; we will say more about the reasons for this result in a following section. The nature of the material collected varies widely; it includes free conversations, jokes, much ritual insulting or signifying (some of it gratifyingly consistent with the tradition of such material), stories, both extemporaneous and formalized, songs, roleplaying (e.g. playing store), and reading from assorted books. There will be some further remarks on the subject of linguistic registers of CBE/Fla in Chapter III of this work.

CHAPTER III: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CBE/Fla

One of the problems which has plagued investigators of dialect and genus is the assignment of particular features to phonology or to syntax. For example, it has been observed that BE, and especially CBE, is characterized by what seems to be a lack of regular past tense forms. This may be treated as a phonological problem, for instance by saying that final consonants such as t and d are omitted in CBE; or as a syntactic problem, by saying that Southern black children do not have a past tense in their grammar. There are a number of features whose assignment to phonology or to syntax seems problematic, although this is the most widespread and troublesome.

There are always grounds on which to decide such questions relatively unambiguously, however. In the first place, it clearly will not do to list the same characteristic twice, as a feature of phonology and as a feature of syntax (as e.g. McDavid has done in his list of problem features of Southern speech; see references). It must be borne in mind too that citing these features as syntax rather than phonology is a very important claim: although one rather expects phonological variation among dialects or genera of English, since this is basically what defines a dialect or a linguistic genus, it would seem more unusual for dialects or genera to possess grammars which differ to this extent. The lack of a marked past tense would be, after all, a highly significant divergence from what is usually conceived as standard average WE.

It is important for those concerned with linguistic genus study to have some basic notions of modern linguistic theory, since this can aid immeasurably in solving problems such as the present one. If it is borne

in mind that all forms of all languages are systematic rather than random, and that the utterances of all languages are interrelated in complicated but finite and consistent ways, then one will be less likely to view Black English or other specific genera as aggregates of syntactic errors or of random and senseless deviations from a norm. Black English has, of course, a syntactic system as complex as that of WE and CBE/CWE likewise. Thus it would be extremely surprising to find a gap in place of the CBE past tense, along with very few other major divergences from standard White English; language just does not usually operate in this fashion. Child Black English has, moreover, a future system which functions in about the way that the future of CWE does. Thus we expect there to be a CBE past in some sense also. It is of course always possible that CBE may lack this feature on the syntactic level, but it is doubtful. The same arguments may be raised about other features likewise ambiguously assigned to phonology or syntax--all other considerations being equal, it is probably preferable to assign such dubious features to phonology, since this is by far the more parsimonious and the more probable claim.

All other considerations are rarely equal, however, and as a matter of fact, detailed study of CBE/Fla has led this investigator to postulate that the supposed lack of a past tense in CBE must be considered a phonological feature. There are three main reasons for this:

1. As noted, the pattern calls for a CBE past: there is a CBE future, and a full complement of temporal adverbs.

2. The loss of past tense markers can be treated by a few extremely general phonological rules which apply to a very large number of instances having nothing to do with verbs--these phonological processes take place

throughout the language, and are perfectly regular. The phonological rules of CBE/Fla provide automatically for loss of regular past tense markers, prior to consideration of syntax, so there is no reason to attribute the same phenomenon to two separate causes, as has been pointed out.

3. Finally, and of course most obviously telling, there is in fact a marked past tense in CBE. It appears in strong verbs, with modals, with 'have' and 'be,' and so forth. It even appears on occasion with regularly marked verbs, for example, in the School register where overcorrection greatly reduces the number of omitted consonants and clusters.

Most of the supposed syntactic deviations of Child Black English in the Southeast are in fact phonological in origin. There are very few major syntactic differences between Black English and White English, insofar as this investigator has been able to observe; the main ones we found are the formation of negatives and of questions, the use of so-called pleonastic pronouns, and the use of the verb 'be' in the present tense. Nearly all other differences between BE and WE seem to be in the area of phonology, segmental and nonsegmental. We believe that a description of the linguistic competence (not linguistic performance) of Southern black children will not differ appreciably, syntactically speaking, from a description of the linguistic competence of Southern or other white children. Thus if any sort of linguistic training is to take place with these children, we urge that it be phonological and not principally syntactic; since the children already have a past tense in their linguistic competence, they will not know what is expected of them by a teacher who attempts to train them therein, and so forth. One can of course work on actual areas of syntactic difficulty, however; cf. Chapter IV of this work for further remarks on this subject.

Below is presented a description of the major phonological differences between CBE/Fla and standard average White English. Some of the rules apply to Southern White English as well as Black, most notably the vowel changes. The rules applying to consonants are in the main peculiar to CBE, however. The rules are described first in simple language; they are presented subsequently in more technical form. The following points may help explain the format of the rules:

1. The rules are to be taken as ordered. That is, #1 must be applied before #2, and so forth, since later rules may operate on the output of prior ones. This is mainly necessary for dealing with 'r,' the so-called reduction dummy, but we have indicated an order for the rules as a whole.

2. The rules are general and broadly applicable, as will be seen. It must be recognized, however, that the field work comprising this study was carried out over a brief period, due to the exigencies of consultant-ship arrangements and child availability; thus the rules are tentative rather than final, and undoubtedly admit of exceptions of various sorts (e.g. with individual morphologically conditioned items). Much more data is needed in order to give a complete account of the phonology of this or other linguistic genus or dialect; the present work is a pilot study.

3. These rules are an account of performance, not of competence, upon which they form some sort of overlay. The effect of this is that most are optional, although some are more optional than others. When the rules are not applied, the result tends to approximate standard Southern WE. The conditions for optionality are not known at this time, although they are clearly situational rather than final and seem to exemplify some sort of style-switching within registers.

4. The notational system in which the rules appear is more or less standard Trager-Smith (1957), with one major exception, as follows. The phonological nature of CBE/Fla is such that there is no really completely satisfactory way to indicate its vowel phonemes. We did not use distinctive feature notation, both for the sake of wider readability and because it presumes more data on this form of language than is now available; nor did it seem wise to claim 12-14 vowel phonemes, as in English notation. Nevertheless the Trager-Smith representation of tense vowels as the corresponding lax vowel plus a glide is not actually faithful to the phonetic facts of the language, for whatever this is worth. In the pronunciation of a word such as 'eggs,' for example, the proper transcription is [eəgz] and not [ejəgz] or [ɛəgz] or other variation. It is possible to pronounce this word as per the second of these variants, with a [j] glide after the first vowel; this is simply a different pronunciation, however, and one which we believe is typical of a different dialect area. There may well be a rise before the schwa in this word, acoustically speaking; however this is neither phonemic nor even significant phonetically: the glide is better conceptualized as straight retraction toward central position. In fact this is a common glide pattern in CBE/Fla: the word 'pig' becomes [pi$\pm$g] and not [pij$\pm$g] or [p^{I}j$\pm$g]. There are of course standard contrasts between phonetically tense and lax vowels.

Of the various unsatisfactory solutions, we chose one which is parsimonious and concise if somewhat unaesthetic. The schwa or barred i in words such as those listed above is not phonemically a full vowel, it is phonemically a central glide of varying character, and it has been so represented. Furthermore these words are one syllable. The notation we

have chosen is to be considered morphophonemic: we represent the sequence [eəgz] as /eyhgz/, and [piɨg] as /piyhg/ (disregarding here the final consonants), since this is the effect of the centering glide. This is merely a convention. Were the former word pronounced with a lax instead of a tense mid front vowel before the glide, it would have been transcribed as /ehgz/.

5. These rules are represented as processes. Now it is of course not accurate to suggest that [pɪ̈g] becomes [piɨg] in CBE/Fla: it does not become this but is simply so realized. The processes given are rules for deriving the phonology of CBE/Fla from that of general WE. This does not propose that Southern black children have such phonology underlying their own and that they derive CBE therefrom. We do not in fact have a position on this at the present time, but it seems rather dubious. It is standard in dialect or genus work to describe those features of the target language which differ from a standard, and so we have done here.

It should finally be noted that by giving these rules, we are implying that there is phonological regularity in the language of the target children, which in fact is precisely the case--just as in all forms of all languages. Rather than viewing e.g. omission of final consonants as random errors, one should be assured that this is a regular rule in the language of these children, and one which operates consistently when it does operate; that is, they either omit final consonants or they do not in a given case, but they do not do this wrong or substitute others haphazardly in the place of the omitted ones.

Phonology of CBE/Fla

1. Phones

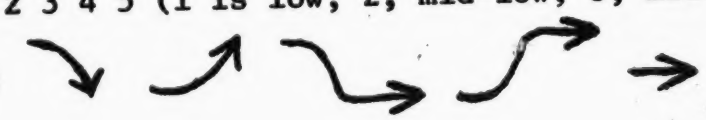
p	t͡	t	k	ʔ
b	d͡	d	g	
f		θ		
v		ð		
		s s̬ c̬		
		z z̬ j̬		
m		n	ŋ	
	l͡	l r		
w		y		
i			u	
I		ɨ	ʉ ʊ	
e			o	
E		ə		
ɛ		ʌ	ɔ	
æ		a	ɑ ɒ	

(Note: CBE/Fla also has nasal vowels [$\tilde{V}$].)

2. Probable inventory of phonemes

p	t	k	
b	d	g	
f	θ		h
v	ð		
	s š č		
	z ž ǰ		
m	n	ŋ	
	lr		
w	y		
i		u	
e	ə	o	
		ɔ	
æ	a	ɑ	

Pitch levels: 1 2 3 4 5 (1 is low; 2, mid-low; 3, mid; 4, hi-mid; 5, hi)

Clause terminals: 

3. Phonological rules: stated

1) In certain one-syllable items, ə→e when followed by s̆ (read: schwa becomes /e/ ...). Examples: brəs̆ → bres̆, həs̆ → hes̆. Occurs in BE only so far as we know; Southern WE pattern in such items is to retract and lower the schwa.

2) Brechung (diphthongization): Typically in one-syllable items, a lax vowel preceded and followed by consonants (or clusters) diphthongizes to the corresponding tense vowel plus a central glide, if the original vowel was a hi or mid front vowel; or to the lax vowel plus a central glide, for low front and back vowels. Examples: egz → eyhgz; flɔr → flɔhr. Southern WE has Brechung rules also, but we believe that they differ from this one.

3) Loss of r: Postvocalic r is always lost; in certain cases it may be replaced by a central glide and/or by length. BE and WE.

4) Loss of l: Postvocalic and final l may be lost; in certain cases it may be replaced by a central glide and/or length. This is much more common in BE than in Southern WE, if indeed it exists in the latter at all.

5) Consonant change (rare): t preceding r may change to k; d preceding r may change to g. Examples: driym → griym; trəbəl → krəbəl. BE only.

6) Reduction of consonant clusters: The final member of a terminal consonant cluster is always lost. The rule is recursive: if the cluster is of three members, the final two are lost. Examples: kihst → kihs; dahmz → dahm; sneyks → sneyk. Probably mainly or only BE.

7) Intervocalic t or d may be replaced by a glottal stop. Examples: kudən → ku'ən; s̆udən → s̆u'ən. Very common in BE and WE.

8) Postvocalic nasal is always lost when word-final and followed by a consonant, or when medial and followed by a consonant; nasal may be lost when word-final and followed by a vowel. Compensatory vowel nasalization is nearly always present. Examples: eyn → ẽỹ ('ain't'); brǽwn → brǽ̃w̃. Mainly or only BE.

9) Plural endings in -əz are lost. Examples: hawzəz → haws (consonant devoiced); bu̍šəz → bu̍š. BE only.

10) A final voiceless stop in one-syllable items is always lost. It may be replaced by a central glide and/or length. Examples: kǽht → kǽh; leyht → leyh. BE only or preponderantly.

11) Monophthongization: Lax front vowels followed by /y/ are monophthongized to the lax vowel plus length, occasionally plus a central glide. Example: tray → tra:. BE and Southern WE.

12) Final v z ž j may be lost before initial m n l r. Example: pliyz liyv → pliy liyv. BE only; rare.

13) Final s z may be lost. Example: kihs → kih. BE only.

14) Back rounded vowels (followed by optional h) are lowered. Examples: šuh → šow; floh → flow. Consistently applied. BE and WE, although probably commoner in BE in this form; WE seems to tend to have /flowə/ (our flowh).

15) Final vowel may be followed by a glottal stop. Example: kih → kih?. We believe this to be a rule of BE only, in which it is very common in the South and elsewhere.

Phonological Rules of CBE/Fla

Rule		Examples
1.	X ə š X → X e š X — X any seq.	1. bræš → breš, hæš → heš
2.	# (C) V (C) → (C) V R (C) — V = -tense	2. (diphthongization)
3.	V r X → V R X — V any V or VR; X any/no seq.	3. (r-loss)
4.	V l (C) # X → V R (C) # X — X any C or ∅; C any C or CC	4. (l-loss)
5.	(rare) # $\lfloor^{t}_{d}\rfloor$ r → # $\lfloor^{k}_{g}\rfloor$ r	5. driym → griym, trəbəl → krəbəl
6.	X V C_1 + C_2 # → X V C_1 # — X any/no seq.; C any cons.; + = morpheme boundary	6. (reduction of clusters) kihst → kihs, dahmz → dahm
6a.	X C_1 + C_2 + C_3 # → X C_1 # (Note: this rule recurs <u>once</u>; thus:)	6a. $siks_1 θs_2$ → $siks_1$
7.	C V $[^{t}_{d}]$ V X → C V ʔ V X	7. kudən → kuʔən
8.	X V N X # Y → X Ṽ R X # Y — X any/no seq. N any nasal V any V or V plus glide Opt for Y = V / N # ___ Ob for Y = {C / N # ___ ; any or no seq. / C # ___	8. (loss of nasal) eyn → ẽy ('ain't') brawn → brãw
9.	X S əz$]_{plur}$ → X s # — S any slit fricative or affricate	9. hawzəz → haws, bušəz → buš

Rule		Examples
10. # (C_1) V C_2 # → X (C_1) V R (ʔ) #	C_1 any C; C_2 = p t k	10. kæht → kæh, leyht → leyh
(Note: This rule precedes contraction, thus: *ðæt's [ðæhs] = ðæʔ + 's)		
11. # C ay (C) → # C a R (C)	C any cons.	11. tray → tra: (h)
12. (rare) V C_1 # C_2 → V R # C_2	V any V or V plus glide C_1= +voice, +strid C_2= +sonorant	12. pliyz liyv → pliy liyv
13. (rare) X V $\left[\begin{smallmatrix}s\\z\end{smallmatrix}\right]$ # C → X V R # C	C any cons.; V any V	13. kihs → kih
14. X C V (h) R # → C ow R	V = +back, -lo, +round	14. šuh → šow, flɔh → flow
15. V R R X → V R X		
16. R → (:) h / V_1 ___ ø / V_2 ___ g ___	V_1 = i e æ a ɔ V_2 = ə g = y w h	
17. X_1 V h X_2 → X_1 V y h X_2	V = i e; X_1 = any or no seq.; X_2 = any seq.	17. ehg → eyhg
18. X V h ə → X V ə		
19. (rare) V # → V ʔ #		

20. Phonetic interpretation of /h/:

i + h = [Ɪ̈ɨ]

e + h = [ə]

a + h = [aə] (occasionally [aɨ])

æ + h = [æə] (or rarely [æɨ])

ey + h = [eə]

iy + h = [iɨ]

ɔ + h = [ɔə]

ɑ + h = [ɑə]

Syntax

As stated, the size of our corpus is insufficient to make any but the most general statements regarding morphosyntactic deviations from standard WE. This writer found four main deviations only from standard WE, namely the use of 'be' in the present tense.

1. The BE (or CBE) usage in so-called wh-questions (questions beginning with a question word such as why or who) is simple: BE does not invert word order before forming such questions, and thus does not need to have the do-transformation precede the wh-transformations). Instead of "why did he say that?" BE will have "Why he said that?" which may be manifested for phonological reasons as, /hwa hiy sey dæn/.

2. In negation, forms of 'have' or 'be' followed by a negative become 'ain't' and the so-called double nagative is standard usage; as contrasted to #1 above, this is common throughout many dialects and genera.

3. CBE/Fla speakers tend to use pleonastic pronouns in such constructions as, "My brother he at school"; this too is common to other variants of language.

4. Finally, the children studied all seem to omit the verb be in all present tense forms, although retaining it in other sequences; forms such as 'Why he be here?' do not appear in the data gathered, although more research on this is needed--the form with be may be characteristic of only certain dialects of BE.

We must emphasize most strongly that the range of common generalizations about BE syntax are in the main incorrect. This language has noun clauses, a full tense system, and other items expected of the language of 11-year-olds. It seems to us not to have syntactic deficiencies as compared with CWE. One must remember, however, that child language is different from adult language: the proper standard for comparative studies of CBE is CWE, not adult WE. The lack of data on CWE prevents any widespread generalizations here, unfortunately, but this investigator did not notice any striking lacunae in CBE syntax. Most of the peculiarities in the verbal system are treated as regular phonological processes here, as has been noted.

In summation, the linguistic genus known as Child Black English does not differ from standard forms of White English, Southern or otherwise, as widely as might be expected, except in the realm of phonology. We do feel that CBE/Fla phonology is fairly divergent from standard average WE. The closeness of CBE and WE in most syntactic respects probably indicates that the few remaining differences can be worked on with impunity by interested school systems, since after all this is not such a global change that it should cause undue difficulty for the children. It is important to remember that CBE is a real form of the English language, with great regularity and consistency once one is able to view it as a system unto itself. It is

not deficient in syntactic complexity--it is not a pidgin language but merely a linguistic genus. We do not know at this time what the situation is in regard to CBE lexicon. The children studied by this writer certainly showed no lack of e.g. abstract terminology, nor any difficulty in comprehending us when we used words not in the children's active lexicon. The entire question of lexicon size is rather overrated as an issue, in our opinion, especially in this age of television. We will have further comments about linguistic retraining in the next section.

CHAPTER IV. SOCIOLINGUISTIC DISCUSSION OF CBE/Fla

A. Bidialectism and linguistic registers

Bidialectism is clearly an issue central to the interests of educators and school administrations, in the South particularly (cf. e.g. Stewart, 1964, p. 16f.). Much has been written on this topic, although little extant material seems to have been based on accurate field observation, since the situation is quite other than that usually reported. By 'bidialectism' is generally meant control by black children (or adults) of both Black and White English. This situation does not seem to exist. As a matter of fact, one might go so far as to say that it does not exist by definition: we have stated that the occasional overlap in ranges of BE and WE is not significant, since they do subsume different ranges and are different genera of English. But such a statement is not necessitated, since even with the usual definitions, bidialectism in this form is not a real occurrence. Note that a speaker called bidialectal in this usage would be called bigeneral (we prefer this to bigeneric) by us, since the question is one of genera, namely BE/WE, and not of dialects or regional variants at all.

The situation which has usually been mistaken for bidialectism is not bigeneralism either, but rather control of several linguistic registers within one genus. In order to discuss the commonality of this situation, it will be necessary to introduce one more technical term, a logical extension of some of the terminology we have been using. We have spoken of BE and WE as genera of English. We may also speak of subspecies belonging to each of these genera. The species are differentiated socially. They might perhaps be labeled Educated and Uneducated, or Urban and Rural (although this does not seem propitious to us), or perhaps, to borrow some

terminology from the sociolinguist Charles Ferguson, Developed and Undeveloped. Uneducated or Undeveloped BE or WE are not to be taken as pejorative terms, in any case. Educated varieties of language are those spoken by educated, often urban speakers of the relevant genus; these may be business and professional people or others at a comparable level. To review, then, dialects are regional; genera are racial; registers are situational; and species are social. Of course all of these factors interact to produce any given idiolect, and all forms of speech are influenced by the dialect of the region, but it is nevertheless an aid to precise analysis to separate the factors in this way. All four classes can be substantiated linguistically.

Now, we have found that it is probably chiefly the speaker of some form of Uneducated or Undeveloped language who is likely to control two or more well-differentiated registers. Thus speakers of Uneducated CBE/Fla are likely to be bi- or multiregistral; but we have met one speaker of decidedly Educated CBE/Fla who does not appear to be so. This is merely an hypothesis at present, it should be noted, and one on which research is needed. At any rate, all speakers of Uneducated CBE/Fla (which is standard in the area) whom we studied are at least biregistral. But it is most important to bear in mind that both registers controlled by such speakers belong to the same genus, namely Black English; and neither is in our view a good approximation to Educated Black English. It is not currently known whether biregistralism is common among speakers of Uneducated WE, but we should not be at all surprised were this to be shown.

That register of CBE/Fla which we have been calling the School register is, as stated, quite distinct from, although related to (perhaps

derived from), the Nonschool register. It is not used exclusively in school, nor exclusively with teachers, although these in practice are the most common uses. Tentatively this writer has observed the School register to be used with the following persons: adults, especially if teachers, more especially if white and if either unknown or not well known to the children, or actually or potentially threatening to or in a position of authority over them; children of the opposite sex, for a group composed exclusively or primarily of children of one sex (particularly if the original group is of girls), and especially if the children of the opposite sex are newly introduced into an established group, or are older, or are not well known; any person newly arrived in a group and not well entrenched with its members, or newly introduced to an individual child. Situations which seem to elicit the School register include: a formal school setting; any classlike situation; any situation threatening to the children; any situation in which the children know or believe that their behavior is being observed for any purpose; possibly any situation involving gross change in normal routine.

A number of interesting observations can be made from the above hypotheses. In the first place, it is clear that the recording sessions conducted by this writer to obtain the data for the present study fell into several of the above categories, even more so since the writer speaks not only a different genus from that of the children, but a different species and a different dialect as well. The effect of this was perhaps rendered somewhat less devastating by television; but nevertheless, familiarity through television with Midwest/Eastern Educated WE, some sort of mixture of which this writer speaks, should not have been nearly sufficient

to induce the children to speak in their Nonschool register. Nor can one assume that merely speaking with the children in groups was responsible for our elicitation of this register, since this was not enough to do it on the tapes which we observed prior to our commencement of this study, even with teachers whom the children had known for a long time.

There were probably a number of factors involved in our success in eliciting the Nonschool register, which most assuredly preponderates on all tapes save that of the first day, as stated earlier. Among the contributory factors we must include this writer's manner toward the children. They were encouraged from the beginning to say precisely what they felt like saying on any subject at all, and to tell any stories which occurred to them even if the stories might be scandalous, which in fact some were. The children were under no circumstances corrected, or insulted, or patronized, or treated as inferiors to the investigator in age, social standing, intellectual capacity, verbal ability or other respects. They were given overwhelming amounts of attention and love, especially the latter, a commodity which they undoubtedly do not as a rule receive from adult white female teachers. They were never threatened with anything whatever, especially not with beatings, a fact with which they were openly and volubly impressed.

Further factors which contributed to the elicitation of the Nonschool register probably include the conducting of the sessions during the summer rather than the regular school year; the lack of formal schedule or routine during sessions; the lack of such evaluative procedures as grades; the freedom of the physical environment of the sessions and the children's freedom to come and go pretty much as they pleased; the nonavoidance of

the investigator of physical contact with the children; and the lack of general restraint on the children. We did not tamper with the children's standard nonschool behavior patterns unless it became absolutely essential: shouting was tolerated unless it became disruptive to the sessions or threatened to disturb the longsuffering principal, whose office was directly across from the clinic; the fighting which forms the core of much of the children's play was tolerated unless it became murderous, which in fact is most rare since it is largely ritualized. Since the children were encouraged to behave in ways normally associated with nonschool linguistic behavior, the linguistic behavior became a natural concomitant of the nonlinguistic, as one might expect since the whole forms one Gestalt.

This writer admits that this degree of success in eliciting Nonschool language is rather unusual. We were much struck with the instant and drastic change in register whenever one of the above-listed circumstances which typically call for the School register occurred. This was most noticeable when the sessions were visited by any other adult whatever; visitors included the principal of the school, who is black, and the teacher with whose help and guidance we set up the project (a specialist in language arts, and known to most of the children), who is white, as well as a number of other adults, black and white. All were received by utter cessation of the Nonschool register, linguistically and behaviorally, although this was rather more observable at the beginning of the two-week period than at the end.

Since bidialectism or bigeneralism do not exist and cannot be imparted by any known method, one may consider the possibility of exploiting bi-registralism in linguistic training or retraining. The first question to

be faced in this area is which register of CBE one wishes to work with as a base. This becomes a serious problem only if the decision is made to work with the Nonschool register; however, there are some significant points in favor of such a decision. As has been indicated previously and will be discussed further in the next section, it is this writer's personal and professional opinion that the Nonschool register is a far more real, fluent, developed and aesthetically superior form of language than the School register. Perhaps the mere fact that the children are more at ease in the former and prefer it greatly, and express themselves therein to people whom they trust and like, might be enough to influence one in this direction. But we doubt at this time that efforts to change the Nonschool register will be met with much success. One reason for this is that it is extremely difficult to elicit this register under even the most permissive school conditions, let alone in a language arts class which the children typically seem to find rather trying. Attempts at correction of items in this register would probably lead to cessation of its use, a perfectly normal and standard defense against this sort of intervention. It is our belief that the most significant contribution that language specialists could make to speakers of CBE/Fla in regard to oral language is encouraging them to speak in their Nonschool register with adults, perhaps especially white adults, since this would no doubt serve to dispel the majority of the myths currently surrounding the capabilities of these children. Association with adults on this basis might well be sufficient to effect any necessary changes in the register. We have described to some extent the way one might go about eliciting it; one should realize that demanding its use will meet with no success at all, although adoption of some of our procedures might well do so.

If, on the other hand, it is determined that some form of linguistic training is called for immediately with speakers of CBE in the South, then some other measures are required. The goals of such training must be carefully specified, and if the training is to be phonological, then it must be consistently administered, and the change from Uneducated CBE must be made to some other unified species of language--we might suggest Educated BE. Again it is pointed out that control of two genera, e.g. BE and WE, is not a viable goal. The following points may be of some interest to those interested in initiating or revising such a program:

1. Deviations in syntax between CBE and Educated adult BE (or for that matter, WE) are few enough that these areas can readily be attacked. Some ways to do this are by pattern drills, presentation of skits or playlets in which are contained the patterns to be learned, Stevick-type 'microwave' dialogues, and so forth. We do not advocate constant and unrelenting correction of e.g. all double negatives; this probably should only be done overtly in the actual language arts or communications classroom. When teachers observe their children using the forms which are to be changed, they may simply use the preferred form themselves to the children directly thereafter, in an unobtrusive manner; the children will probably notice this on some level.

2. If the children are old enough, they should be told why their speech is being changed. This writer cannot emphasize strongly enough the immediate necessity for discarding the notion that the speech of Southern black or other children is wrong, improper, haphazard, ugly or unsuitable, or evidence of willfulness, laziness or a defiant attitude. Children should never be given the idea that anyone feels this way about their

language; if educators or administrators do so feel, they need not change their opinions if it is impossible for them to do so, but they should take utmost pains to conceal them from the children since such attitudes are quite noticeable and will not elicit the desired linguistic or nonlinguistic responses.

The most efficient approach to use, then, is probably to take the position with the children not that their speech is being corrected so much as that they are being given a set of patterns which will be of greater utility to them in certain specific situations, e.g. when seeking jobs or when traveling. It is never too early to begin instilling such attitudes, since even young children will understand them, and in fact if the rationale behind language drills is presented to the children, the entire program will prove more successful than if the children are baffled as to the purpose of such drills or suspect that their natural language is bad and must be eradicated and replaced by another.

3. If the phonological system of any form of language is tampered with at all, this in effect will alter the entire system, since it is all interconnected and no part of it is properly regarded as separable. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, however. We do not know at this time what would be the result e.g. of attempting to induce speakers of CBE/Fla to pronounce final consonants, without changing the remainder of their phonology. It is probably worth trying. All such attempts should be based on understanding of the children's present phonological rules, and the project goals should be to substitute other specific rules in place of certain present ones rather than to effect global changes by a shotgun technique. When children are old enough, e.g. high school age, they

might perhaps even profit from having the rules explicitly demonstrated to them, so that they might see precisely what is expected of them, the first requisite for success in any training program.

This writer must remark here again that the phonological system of CBE/Fla is quite divergent from that of general WE, on three separate counts: it is an Uneducated species and has certain features thereof; it is BE instead of WE; and it is a form of child language. Additionally, of course, it is a Southern dialect of all this and shares certain features with Southern WE only; and it must be recognized that Southern WE is not considered standard throughout the country. It is readily conceivable that a white speaker of Northern English might have difficulty understanding some CBE/Fla speakers, although the reverse does not in general seem to hold. This might well provide a sufficient rationale for retraining. It is our opinion that the phonology of CBE is the main contributor to any intergeneric unintelligibility; and the phonology is by far the greatest cause of interracial prejudice based on language. BE/WE differences on other levels are minimal enough to be ruled out for all practical purposes as major factors, although these differences do exist and may be corrected as well (cf. Section 1 above).

4. It is not necessary to refrain from carrying out linguistic retraining in the schools on the grounds that such training is destructive to culture patterns or personal values. Providing that one has a solid rationale for such retraining, such as that noted above, this worry will be groundless: culture does not reside in language patterns but in people, and a change in linguistic form does not entail a change in culture, particularly not a destructive change. If it is felt that the phonology of

CBE/Fla speakers is sufficiently divergent from that of other speakers to cause serious difficulties, which in fact it may be, then it is the social obligation of the relevant schools to work at ameliorating the difficulties. Educators and administrators severely troubled by this consideration, however, might wish to think about the possibility of reinforcing the Nonschool register instead, as noted earlier.

5. It is important not to rely entirely on pattern drills or other artificial forms of language in linguistic work in school; nor is it probably wise to work entirely from extant materials, since none have been developed specifically for this purpose yet. Educators in language arts should attempt to induce their children to use the new patterns in actual speech insofar as is possible, preferably in dialogues with one another rather than merely in parroting what the teacher says to them. The idea behind this is to make the new patterns as real as possible for the children.

B. Nonfluency and inarticulateness

The vast majority of extant articles and research projects concerned with CBE, especially in the South, include notes about the inarticulateness or lack of verbal fluency of the target children (cf. e.g. Bereiter & Englemann, 1966; Costa, n.d.; Hurst & Jones, 1966). A large number of such projects have in fact been centered around this concern and are designed to remedy both the supposed inarticulateness and also the lack of ability to conceptualize or form abstract thoughts which is the usual proposed concomitant of the former.

This writer has discerned from the present study what it is that motivates such an hypothesis, the commonality of which is not overstated in the above paragraph. The reader will recall our discussion of the School

register and its characteristics, especially those which prompted our decision to elicit other forms of language. To reiterate, characteristics of this register include short sentences, generally in as simple syntactic patterns as possible, and peculiarities of pitch and stress which make the register sound unlike standard WE or even normally fluent CBE. In short, the general effect of the school register is precisely one of non-fluency. It is not surprising to us that many previous investigators have considered these children, in the words of one recent article, to be lacking in "cognitive, affective, motivational, and social areas" (Blank and Solomon, op cit). The reason for such mistaken notions is that overt expression of affect or peer interaction are kept to a minimum in situations in which the School register is used, and language itself is confined to relatively simplified form.

However, the concept of the rural Southern black or other disadvantaged child as nonverbal or inarticulate is inaccurate (cf. e.g. Povich & Baratz, 1967; Shriner & Miner, 1967). This investigator found the CBE/Fla speakers with whom we worked to be extremely gifted verbally, fluent and articulate. Perhaps because they tend not to have a plethora of real objects with which to busy themselves and have fun, these children frequently engage in rather sophisticated and thoroughly delightful verbal play. They are exceptionally creative with language, in the use of which they often find obvious joy; much of their ritualized insult game is actually nothing but playing with words, for example. Their use of language can be pithily direct or beautifully subtle, as in fact is the case for most children in whom the love of language has not been destroyed by one means or another. Included in the appendix to this paper is a transcription of a story told by Rabbit,

the child mentioned earlier as one of the prime movers of the second-day interview sessions and a remarkably talented storyteller and verbal artist. The story is perfectly standard and formalized--it is, or used to be before Rabbit's improvements thereon, merely "The Three Little Pigs,"-- but the child's delight in words for their own sake and his gifts at verbal embellishment are quite clear. Rabbit is a spinner of his own tales, also; some of these are quite hair-raising, but all are witty and entertaining. Although the boy is unquestionably exceptional in linguistic skills (one of two highly gifted children in the group with whom we worked), he is probably not to be considered rare in this regard.

Once one has become reconciled to the notion that CBE (or BE in general) is not a stunted or deficient demilanguage but rather a full and complex system, as are all forms of all languages, then one will automatically reject the notion that BE does not give its speakers an adequate conceptual or linguistic base with which to think and to understand the environment. The speakers of CBE/Fla are clearly able to think, in whatever sense one wishes to use the word, and to understand and react promptly and appropriately to their complex and often somewhat hostile environment. Their abilities in abstract thinking struck this investigator as commensurate with those of any other children their age, although to be sure we cannot be certain what the various writers who have proposed a disability in this area for CBE speakers might have had in mind. We might point out the relative inutility of many standard intelligence tests to the rural Southern black culture: these tests are in the main culture-bound and irrelevant to any but standard white middle-class urban America. This writer would urge the development of devices specifically designed to

provide intelligence measures valid for the area in which we worked, since the children there represent a vast undeveloped and potentially highly valuable resource, the nature of which should be explored fully and immediately.

C. Reading

In the opinion of this writer, the area of communications in which the most pressing problems exist for the speaker of Southern CBE is reading. We were frankly appalled by the reading abilities, or nonabilities, of nearly all of our target children. Perhaps a large part of the difficulty is that their manner of reading is what has been termed 'word calling,' or reading each word in a sentence with strong stress, high pitch and basic list intonation as though it were written in a foreign language. Frequently, of course, the material which these children have available to read might as well be in a foreign language, because it is both irrelevant to any facet of their lives and written in a genus, species and dialect which they do not speak.

There are probably a number of possible approaches to be taken in ameliorating this situation, the gravity of which cannot be overly impressed upon relevant educational specialists. It is likely that the method by which the children learn to read is partly at fault; from the children's attack on words which they had not seen before, we surmise this to be sight-reading or a whole word method rather than one based on phonics or other phonological segmentation technique. Since much of the lexicon found in e.g. newspapers is not in the active language of the children, the whole-word method will in the aggregate not work once the children are out of school. There is no phonological method adapted to

the linguistic genus of these children at present, however, and it is not possible to teach them to read phonically if the phonics are based on a form of speech other than their own. We suggest that this is a problem to be investigated by linguistic specialists interested in reading, since such a technique can surely be evolved without undue difficulty.

It is also essential to work on alleviating the style used in oral reading. This style is, as we have said, one of those which comprise the School register; if it is eliminated, then some other style within the same register will probably be substituted, but there could be nothing worse than that which is now used for reading aloud. We must emphasize that the problem of linguistic retraining is completely separate from the problem of changing the reading style, and the two are not to be attacked simultaneously. The ideal solution would be to induce the children to read aloud in their Nonschool register. It may be possible to elicit this behavior; but this cannot be done if the children's phonology is being corrected at the same time, since such correction is invariably sufficient to effect suppression of the Nonschool register. One way of producing a more desirable reading style is by listening to something the child says spontaneously, writing this on the blackboard and then having him read it. When he reads it by word calling, as he invariably will, he can be made to notice the differences between what he just produced and his former utterance (perhaps by taping the original utterance and then playing it back). He might be told to say the sentence to the child next to him, for instance, and then to read it in the same manner, or alternatively the teacher might say the sentence in a conversational manner and then have the child repeat it. The essential thing to be achieved here is a

realization on the part of the children that the material which they read is in fact language and not something else. This writer notes that children who read by the most painful word calling style imaginable seem to understand what they have read, however, since if it is e.g. directions on how to work a grammatical exercise, they can proceed to do so without trouble after having 'read' the directions aloud.

Finally, it is only too obvious that much of the fault lies with the sort of material which the children are given. So-called English books are surely at fault; but there is at this time no set of reading-instruction materials adequate to the needs of black or white children of any age, for a variety of linguistic and psycholinguistic reasons rather too complicated to be discussed at length here. Suffice it to say that the children with whom we worked seemed to have a strong sense of the irrelevance of school-presented reading materials. A good solution to the problem would be to have the children make up stories, individually or as a class, and then transcribe these and present them as reading materials. If the class writes stories centered around the same set of characters (and these need not be a 'typical family,' either), they can be given some such stories to read and then write further episodes as homework assignments, for instance. In fact this is a useful project anyway, since the calss can present playlets about their characters and engage in other activities centered around them. It is this writer's professional opinion that no literature or other written material can be deleterious to the young mind: the children should be encouraged to read anything and everything they wish, including comics and <u>True Confessions</u> magazine. The teacher might even wish to see about subscribing to some of these questionable periodicals

for the children, an item for which it is well worth extending the budget. Although we do not especially suggest subscriptions to standard popular adult magazines, it is likely that anything the children will read is better than nothing. The main point is to have available reading materials which the children will want to read. An alternative is raiding used book stores for suitable paperbacks, which can often be obtained very inexpensively in volume. The teacher in doubt as to what level of difficulty the children will tolerate should start by presenting them with as sophisticated material as she can find concerned with something that truly interests them. Again we repeat that reading material does not need to be elevating to be profitable.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigator has attempted to give here some account of the language and communication of speakers of Child Black English in rural Northern Florida, from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. This study was unfortunately, if necessarily, brief, and cannot approach inclusivity. There is room and urgent need for far more detailed technical linguistic work within this dialect and genus, clearly; and sociolinguistic information may prove even more useful at this time. We hope that this report may help to dispel some of the misconceptions concerned with the speaker of CBE, and to suggest avenues for future exploration.

Appendix

The following is a sample transcription of a narrative in CBE/Fla. It is in rather narrow transcription segmentally; two degrees of stress, namely strong and secondary, are marked, and five levels of pitch, with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest. The narrative transcribed here is "The three little pigs," as told by Rabbit, an eleven-year-old boy. Connected discourse by this child is preceded by an R. Also present at the recording session where this story was told were Rabbit's brother Andrew, about 9 years old, and two girls, Barbara Ann and Jeanette, both about 11. Relevant interruptions by any of these children (i.e., interruptions heeded and responded to by Rabbit), are indicated and prefaced by the initial of the interrupting child's name. As is mentioned in the text, Rabbit is an extremely gifted verbal artist; his variations on the standard version of this story are to be noted.

R
ðɪs· tɔrɪ bɑʊʔ ˈθri lɪl piːɨgz↘ [ʔɑm↗] ˈwʌːn dei↗ ðə ˈlɪl piɨgz wɛn ˈat tə pleː↘ [ʔɑ]

B
hi æʔ krim ən paː·↘

R
hi hɛ̃ʔ griːnə paː↘ [ɨn ʌː] hi meid ĩ lɨʔ haüs↘ wɐ̃ meid ə dɐ̃ug haüs æn ˈwɐ̃ meid ə hɔug haüs↘ [ən ʔn] ˈwʌn meid ə ˈpiɛ̃↘ dɛn də ˈfɐ̃ʔ keim↘ ˈlɛ ˈmi iɛ̃↘

(in deep voice) nou nou ma ʃɪn ʃɪn ʃiɛ̃↘ ənɐ̃n hi sei↘ al ˈblou jou lɪ haüs daün↘ hi blou ɪʔ daü hi sei↘ hi pʌːf↗ hi rʌːf↗ ʔæn ə tʌːf↗ ʔæn ə wʌː↗ æn i

blou də haÜ? daün↓ æn ə lɪ 'pɪɨ i rʌn tu də ʌdə haÜ?↓ ['æ→] æ̃ 'dɛ̃↗ n→kẽĩ

tu də # hɒug hɑus↓ 'lɛ mi i:ɨn↓ɔr ai nak də 'haÜs daÜ̃↓ ənɪ?↗ 'nakt ən i

'nakt↗ ən i 'nakt də 'haÜs daün↓ æ̃ə̃↓æn i 'wɛ̃ ən ɛn ɪ→ ?ʌə̃ə pɪɨ ræ̃ tu ə

hau↓ [æ̃?→ ænə→ ænʌ:: n: ʌ:]

B

hi keim tədə bɪg haÜs↳

R

hi 'keim tʊdə 'bɪg haus↳ [æn ?ʌ] ˌwʌ̃ sei↳ lɛ mi 'ĩ:ɨ̃↓ [æn i i ʌ] æn i sei↳

ˌnou ˌnou ˌnou ma ʃɪni ʃɪn ʃi·ɨ̃↓ [æ̃? æni] hi nakt də haÜs daün↓

B

'no hi dɪ?n↓

R

no i 'dɪ?n nak dɪ 'haÜs daün↓

A

hi kʊ?n 'brek ɪ? daün↓

R

hi "hə:f↗ ən i "pə:f↗æn i 'tə:f↗æn ə 'rʌ:f↗æn ə 'nə:f↗æn i 'næ:f↗

æn ə 'nə:f↗æn i 'næ:f→ æn i 'kʊ· 'nak di haÜs daün↓[æn ʌ] hi sei→"lɪ·l

"pi:ɨ?↳ 'æ nou sʌmhwei sʌm 'æpəz 'æət↓ hi sei↓ "hwei↓ ?ʌ m→ daün tu

də mɪlə haɪ laɪ?↗ æ n i sei↳ [æ̃ ?æn ʌ·] ?i sei↓ 'hwʌt ta·m ju goʊɪn↓

hi sei bɑut 'wʌn ə 'klɑk↗[?ə] ?ən ɛn ə lɪl pɪɨg· at ʌp æ?→ 'zirou

əklɑk↓?æ̃→[æn ʌ:] æn i wɛ̃? ə pɪkt əz æpəz↓ ən ɛ̃ wɛ̃n ə [pɪ·?] ænə

?oul wʊÜf kẽĩ→ pɪg sei↓

A

'rɛdɪʔ ↗

R

[ʔə]'lɪl "piɨg↗ ʃɛd ʌp ↘

A

'meik mi ↘

R

[ʔə̃ ə̃] jə 'rɛ:dɪ↗ nou· ↘ doũ ju smɛl ma 'goul· dəlɪ ɪs ɳiɳiə kukɨn↗ ən æ
wu·f→[oʔnʌ] 'mæ̃:ə̃↘ ənɛn ʌ:→ dɛn ʌ:→ dɛn ʔʌ di wuʔf sei↳"lɪl "piɨg
lɪl piɨg↘ hwʌʔ↳ 'aɪ nou hwɛə sʌ̃ gri:nz æʔ↘ 'hwei↘ da·n tu də 'mɪlə 'hæ: →
mɪlə haüs↗ʔi sei ʔ 'hwʌt ta·m jə gouɪn↘ bɑt→tɪ̃ɪ̃ əklɑk↗ ɛn→ ənə lɪl
piɨg gat əp æ æʔ 'wʌn əklɑk↘ ɨi wɛ̃ʔ n gat də grin ə puʔm õũ ən 'dɛn wɛnə
ʔə oul faks kɛ̃ɪ̃↳hi sei→ 'lɪl "piɨg↘ jə 'rɛdɪ↗ i sei↘'nou:↘ 'a dʌ̃
'gaʔ 'ma· gri:nz↘[æn 'hi] æn 'ou wuʔ i dɪ̃ du nʌʔ↘ jə 'smɛl ət↗ ðə 'hɑʔ
ˌwɔtə 'stɪl ə'bɔəlɪn↘ æn ou [f] wuʔ gɑʔ↘ 'ɑmə dʒʌ̃ʔ daun jou ţɪmnɪ↘[ɛn ʌ:
ɛn ʌ::] də oul piɨg puʔ sʌm woutə ʌn·ə də faijə tɪ wɛ ju ku 'dʒʌmp 'ɪn ə
i 'dʒʌmpt 'ɪn də ˌɪɪl 'piɨg ə hæd ə kukt ə grɪ̃ jɛ hi fu:lə hi [sɛ hi dʒʌmpt]
də oul wulf dʒʌmpt ɪnə hɑʔ wɔtʔəʃ→ən dei hæd [grinz ən] 'grin ən 'faks↘

A

'wulf

R

'grinz ən wulf↘

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